

1	2
Maharashtra	996
Madhya Pradesh	191
MTNL Mumbai	Nil
MTNL New Delhi	556
Punjab	1009
North East	99
Orissa	37
Rajasthan	686
Tamil Nadu	1370
Uttar Pradesh (East)	293
Uttar Pradesh (West)	519
West Bengal	105

Utilization of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in Gujarat

336. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

- (a) the steps taken so far to encourage the utilisation of non-conventional energy sources in Gujarat;
- (b) the total amount spent thereon during the last three years;
- (c) whether satisfactory achievement has been made in this regard;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government review it from time to time; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the last review ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) The Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is implementing a wide range of programmes to generate and utilise non-conventional energy such as; the Integrated Rural Energy Programme (IREP), the setting up of Biogas plants, Improved Chulhas, Biomass Gasification and Briquetting plants, Solar Thermal

Water Heating, Both domestic and industrial, Solar Photovoltaic energy based rural home-lighting, lanterns, water pumping for irrigation and village level power plants, grid connected power from Wind Energy. Small Hydro, Biomass Combustion, Bagasse-based Co-generation and Solar Photovoltaic Energy and electrical power from urban and Industrial Wastes, throughout the country including in the State of Gujarat.

(b) The total amount released by this Ministry to the State of Gujarat, during the last three years, is Rs. 2257.81 lakhs.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir. The achievements made under the various programmes of the Ministry are reviewed from time to time.

(f) the details of the physical achievements for 1996-97 under various major programmes of the Ministry, in the State of Gujarat, is given in the attached Statement.

Statement

Physical Targets and Achievements under Major Renewable Energy Programme in the State of Gujarat, for 1996-97

S. No.	Name of the Programme	1996-97	
		Target	Achievement
1.	Biogas		
	(i) NPBD (Nos.)	19,000	18,019.
	(ii) CBP/IBP (Nos.)	5	2
2.	Improved Chulha (Nos.)	43,000	71,176
3.	Biomass Gasifier (KW)	No targets fixed	160
4.	Solar Lanterns (Nos.)	2,000	1,400
5.	SPV Water Pumping Systems (Nos.)	No targets fixed	15
6.	Water Pumping Wind Mills (Nos.)	No targets fixed	36
7.	Wind Energy (MW)	No targets fixed	31.137

NPBD = National Project on Biogas Development

CBP = Community Biogas Plants
 IBP = Institutional Biogas Plants
 KW = Kilo watt, MW = Mega watt
 SPV = Solar Photovoltaic

**Misuse of Indira Awas Yojana Funds
 In Bihar**

337. SHRIMATI SUBHAWATI DEVI : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) the quantum of funds disbursed under Indira Awas Yojana in Bihar during 1996-97;
- (b) whether the Government are aware that not a single house has been constructed till date in some of the districts of the State under Indira Awas Yojana;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the action taken or proposed to be taken against the persons held responsible for misuse of the IAY funds in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPY YERRANNAIDU) : (a) During 1996-97, Rs. 157.38 crore were released to Bihar as Central Assistance under Indira Awas Yojana.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Committee Constitution of SEBs

338. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

- (a) whether any Committee has been Constituted for making State Electricity Boards more effective and for removing prevailing corruption therein;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government propose to hand over the SEBs to Private Sector; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) & (b) No, Sir. However, the Government has

finalised a Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power (CMNPP) on the basis of a consensus reached at the Chief Ministers' Conferences held on 16.10.1996 and 3.12.1996. The Action Plan provides for autonomy to the State Electricity Boards, improvement in the management practices and of physical parameters of SEBs. The Action Plan has already been circulated to all the State/UT Governments for implementation of the proposals contained therein.

- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

[English]

Upgradation of LPT to HPT in Karnataka

339. SHRI RAJA RANGAPPA NAIK : Will the Minister of INFORMATIONS AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government are considering for upgradation of Raichur Doordarshan Kendra in Karnataka from LPT to HPT; and
- (b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be accorded approval and implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) and (b) A High Power TV Transmitter (HPT) is envisaged to be set up in replacement of the existing Low Power TV Transmitter (LPT) at Raichur in Karnataka, subject to approval of the scheme by the competent authority, availability of resources and inter-se-priorities. The normal lead time in the implementation of a project of this magnitude is about 2-3 years, from the date of start of civil works at the site.

Satellite Communications Sector to Private Sector

340. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government have decided to open up the Satellite Communication Sector to private sector as well as privatisate INSAT; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Satellite communications for Closed Users Groups is being provided by Indian registered companies leasing INSAT capacity. INSAT is a

Government owned satellite system and the transponder on INSAT is being used by both Government and Private users.

Licences are being given by DOT to the Indian registered companies for providing "64 Kbps Domestic Data Network Closed Users Group Service by using VSATs (Very Small Aperture Terminals)" over the INSAT satellite system. So far thirteen (13) licenses have already been awarded to various companies from 3.8.94 onwards. Nine (9) companies have started the service.

Poverty Alleviation Programme in Rajasthan

341. COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government are aware that about 39.28% rural people of Western Rajasthan are living below poverty line;
- (b) if so, whether the Government propose to formulate some crash programme to improve their living conditions;
- (c) whether the Government are contemplating to declare 'Helmets' & Dhanis of desert areas a Revenue villages to enable them to reap the benefits of development programmes which are presently restricted to Revenue villages only; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPY YERRANNAIDU) : (a) As per estimates of poverty for 1993-94 released by planning Commission, the percentage of rural poor living below poverty in Rajasthan is 26.46.

- (b) No proposal for formulating crash programme is under consideration with the Govt.
- (c) and (d) The subject matter does not come within the purview of the Central Government.

Fire in Chennai Telephone Exchange

342. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there was a major fire accident in

Chennai Telephone Exchange:

- (b) if so, the number of lines affected and the amount of loss suffered thereto;
- (c) whether any enquiry in the matter has been made;
- (d) if so, the details and causes of the accident; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to avoid such accidents in future ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. On 23-6-97 a major fire took place in Anna Road Telephone Exchange Complex in Chennai.

(b) About 32,357 telephone lines were affected due to this fire. Total loss suffered on account of this fire is estimated to the tune of Rs. 6.5 crores (approx).

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Technical and Development Circle Jabalpur is investigating the cause of fire and the enquiry is in final stage.

(e) Standing instructions on the subject have been re-iterated to all the field units for strict compliance to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

Delhi Telephone Directory

343. SHRI THOMAS HANSDA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Delhi Telephone Directory was last issued at the end of 1994;
- (b) if so, how many new telephone connections have been provided to the subscribers in Delhi after the issue of Directory;
- (c) whether any arrangements have been made to provide service to the subscribers in the absence of a Telephone Directory;
- (d) the time by when the new telephone Directory is proposed to be issued; and
- (e) the reasons for the delay ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 556320 telephone connections have been provided to the subscriber in Delhi upto 31.3.97 since issue of the last directory.

(c) Yes, Sir. The following arrangements have been made to provide Directory Service to the subscribers :-

- (i) Non-metered Directory Enquiry Service 197 is operating from six Directory Enquiry Centres in Delhi.
- (ii) Directory Dial Up Service for Computer and Intel Users.
- (iii) Computerised Changed Number Announcement Service (Non-metered) is available through IVRS on 1951 (Hindi) and 1952 (English).
- (iv) Walk in Directory enquiry at Head Quarter and Area Customer Service Centres (CSC).
- (v) Telephone Directory in CD ROM is available on sale at Darya Ganj, K.L. Bhawan, Shakti Nagar, Bhikaji tama Place, Nehru Place, Maya Puri, Rajouri Garden and Laxmi Nagar Telephone Exchange/Customer Service Centres (CSC).

(d) Tenders are under evaluation. The telephone Directory for Delhi is likely to be issued by March, 1998.

(e) The delay in printing of Delhi Telephone Directory was due to contractor's problems.

[Translation]

Increase in Train Accidents on Bhopal-Jhansi route

344. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been spurt in the number of train accidents on the Bhopal – Jhansi route during each of the last two years.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to check the increasing number of accidents on this route ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) There were 13 train accidents on Bhopal – Jhansi route during 1996-97 as compared to 9 during 1995-96.

(c) Some of the measures taken to improve safety and prevent accidents are as under :-

- (i) The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.
- (ii) Modification of the signalling circuitry is being carried out to minimise chances of human errors in causing accidents.
- (iii) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie damping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.
- (iv) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.
- (v) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.
- (vi) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axle.
- (vii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.
- (viii) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.
- (ix) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.
- (x) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of simulators for training of drivers.
- (xi) Refresher courses regularly organised at specified intervals.
- (xii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.
- (xiii) Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

(English)

Telephone waiting list in Gurgaon

345. SHRI R. DEVADASS : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have cleared the telephone waiting list upto 1.1.96 in Gurgaon;

(b) if so, the present position of allotting telephone connections to the people who have got themselves registered in Gurgaon after 1.1.96;

(c) whether the Government have suspended the work of giving telephone connections to the people enlisted after 1.1.96;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) if not, the number of telephones released to the persons enlisted after 1.1.96 and the time by which the connections are likely to be provided to them ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The waiting list upto 1.1.96 has been cleared except a few technically non-feasible cases.

(b) The status of clearance of waiting list, in various categories, is as follows :

Sl. No.	Category	Cleared upto
1.	OYT	15.7.1997
2.	N-OYT (Special)	10.7.1997
2.	N-OYT (General)	1.1.1996

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of the above.

(e) 2200 telephone connections stand provided, to those applicants who got themselves registered after 1.1.1996. Rest of the applicants are being provided the connections progressively and a substantial waiting list is likely to be cleared before 31.3.98.

Power Allocation Formula

346. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the power allocation formula is followed

by the Government uniformly for all central sector power stations;

(b) if not, the logic of deviations from the formula;

(c) whether the Government of Rajasthan requested the Union Government to review the formula for allocation of power from the central generating power stations based on projected shortage of power; and

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be reviewed to ensure additional power to the State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) By and large the power allocation formula has been followed by the Government for all central sector power stations except in the case of Kayamkulam in Kerala, Simhadri in Andhra Pradesh and Faridabad in Haryana, which are exclusively dedicated to the respective states. For a variety of reasons including NTPC not having sufficient project units portfolio, it was decided to consider setting up a few projects like Kayamkulam, Simhadri and Faridabad exclusively for individual states. It has also been decided that such projects be set up as separate subsidiary companies of NTPC in which the concerned State Governments/SEBs should have an equity.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The present formula is being examined in consultation with CEA, CPSU's and State Governments/ State Electricity Boards.

Mehta Committee Report

347. SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since received Mehta Committee Report on rural areas and development;

(b) if so, the salient features of the reports; and

(c) the details of the recommendations accepted and rejected, separately, alongwith the reasons of rejections ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPY YERRANNAIDU) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Committee has submitted interim report to Reserve Bank of India.

(b) The salient features of the interim report and the recommendations accepted by the Government are :-

- (i) Greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institution in the implementation of IRDP.
- (ii) Selection of the families below poverty line for assistance under IRDP should be from those with skills, aptitude and experience in handling assets. Others would also be provided assistance under IRDP, subject to acquiring or upgrading their skills under TRYSEM or other related training programmes.
- (iii) Switchover from present front end subsidy to back-end subsidy.

- (iv) Measures for better recovery of IRDP loan.
- (v) Realistic repayment schedules and increasing the security free limits.
- (vi) Need to meet Working capital requirement.
- (vii) Stress on better Planning and development of infrastructure.
- (viii) Increase in the level of per family assistance by providing larger credit and higher subsidy.
- (ix) Encouragement of group activities.
- (x) Modification of traditional target oriented approach.
- (c) Details in the Statement attached.

Statement

Recommendations made by the expert Committee and Action Taken thereon

Recommendations	Action Taken
1	2
<p>1. The poor without skills and experience in handling assets should be segregated into a separate category by a Committee comprising the representatives of blocks, Panchayat, lead banks, school masters, postmasters, prominent villagers and grass-root NGOs; such poor people should be initially provided wage employment under wage employment under various schemes of State Governments and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. They should also be supported by providing for greater social consumption expenditure. They would be provided with assistance under IRDP subject to their acquiring or upgrading their skills. The other segment of the poor i.e. families above the poor IAF of the poor which has reasonable measure of skills and experience may be provided assistance under IRDP straightforward. The relatively new entrants to job market may be provided training under TRYSEM or other programmes followed by assistance under IRDP.</p> <p>2. For doing away with leakages and malpractices, the Committee recommends switchover from front-end to backend system of subsidy. The benefit of subsidy should also be available to borrowers who prefer to avail themselves of working capital finance.</p>	<p>The Ministry is of the view that all the BPL families should be covered under IRDP. Whenever required beneficiaries will be given training according to their skill and aptitude. A new category of trained literate youth who will get higher subsidy has been introduced.</p> <p>Necessary instructions have been issued.</p>

1

3. For improving recovery, Government of India may consider linking of certain percentage of subsidy allocation to recovery performance. Special recovery officers may be appointed by Govts. Enactment of Model Bill as recommended by Talwar Committee by remaining State Governments may be expedited. Loan waivers may not be declared. DRDAs, Vos and SHGs may help banks in recovery. Utilisation-Reporter-Cum-Recovery facilitators may be appointed on commission basis.
4. The work relating to identification of investment opportunities and preparation of project profiles may be undertaken by district level Technical Group to be set up by DRDAs.
5. DRDAs must prepare a prospective plan of infrastructure in consultation with DCC and BLBC. The limit of expenditure for setting up of infrastructure may be raised to 20% of budgetary allocation. Atleast one mini ITI or Rural Polytechnic may be set up in each block for imparting training to poor rural youth. Private sector may be associated with the task of setting up such institutions. Additional shifts for TRYSEM should be opened to all ITIs and other training institutions.
6. Democratic character of IRDP should be restored and strengthened by ensuring greater involvement of Panchayats and village population as also be imparting to the process of identification of beneficiaries a greater degree of transparency.
7. Banks may be authorised to finalise targets in respect of IRDP under service area plans on the basis of previous years' actual figures after adding 10% for cushioning, without waiting for targets from Government of India.
8. Banks should fix realistic repayment schedules and, provide for gestation period where required. Working capital assistance in the form of cash credit limits may also be provided where necessary. The repayment period of IRDP loans should not be less than 5 years. Banks may encourage group loans for various activities under IRDP. The limit of non-obtention of mortgage may be fixed at Rs. 25,000/- for all activities under IRDP. Collateral security may not be insisted for loans upto Rs. 50,000/-. Banks may be given freedom to select the beneficiaries from BPL list on a pilot basis.

2

Instructions have been issued by the RBI. State Governments have also been requested to take appropriate action.

Instructions have been issued by the RBI. Separate instructions have also been issued by the Ministry.

RBI has issued instructions. Instructions have also been issued by this Ministry to the States/UTs, and also for setting up of Mini ITI and-and also for opening additional shifts for TRYSEM. Ceiling on infrastructure development has been raised to 25% in North Eastern States including Sikkim and 20% in other States/UTs.

Provision already exists under the IRDP manual. Separate instructions issued by RBI to financial institutions.

Instructions to this effect have been issued by this Ministry.

Instructions have been issued by the RBI.

1

2

9. The level of per family/enterprise investment under IRDP should be enlarged by providing larger credit as also higher amount of subsidy.
10. Non-farm tiny/small enterprise and services sector may be further promoted under IRDP.
11. DRDAs must be reorganised into compact teams of professional and technical experts.
12. Voluntary organisations and Self-Help-Groups may be associated with the implementation of IRDP. In the case of projects approved by CAPART a few V.O.s can be on pilot basis given list of BPL families for identification of borrowers, ensuring availability of backward/forward linkages, as also verifying end use of credit.
13. Banks should provide loans under IRDP for acquisition of land.
14. Cash disbursement under IRDP may be extended throughout the country. Family Credit Plan Scheme should also be further encouraged.
15. Supplementary doses of assistance under IRDP may be provided to beneficiaries who have not crossed the poverty line with initial assistance.
16. Panchayati Raj Institutions at grass-root or middle levels should be involved in the implementation of IRDP.
17. A new dimension should be added to IRDP through Information Education and/Commission budget should be provided.

Decisions have been communicated to all concerned to encourage group activities and for provision of higher subsidy for trained educated rural youth. Further emphasis has been laid on credit mobilisation.

Necessary instructions have been issued by the RBI.

Instructions have been issued to the State Governments in this regard.

Instructions have been issued by the RBI. Provisions for associating the V.O.s already exists in the IRDP Manual.

Necessary instructions have been issued by the RBI.

Necessary instructions have been issued by the RBI.

Provisions exist under the IRDP Manual.

Provisions already exist under IRDP Manual.

Separate budget provision already exists.

Railway facilities in Orissa

348. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the steps are being taken to provide better rail communications facilities between Paradeep and Cuttack in Orissa;
- (b) if so, the projects launched for the purpose; and
- (c) the expected time of the completion of the on-going projects ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work of doubling of Talcher-Cuttack-Paradeep section has been taken up.

(c) Within the 9th Plan period.

Generation of Power

349. SHRI JAGMOHAN : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

- (a) whether less power has been generated during

the Eighth Five Year Plan as compared to the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the quantum of power generated against the target set therefor during the Eighth Five Year Plan alongwith the reasons of such shortfall, if any;

(d) whether the Government have made the mid term appraisal of the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(e) if so, the reasons of the failure of the said plan in the power sector; and

(f) the measures contemplated for not repeating such failure in the Ninth Plan ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The total power generated during the 8th Plan and 7th Plan are 1750.5 billion units and 1025.8 billion units respectively.

(c) The total power generated during the Eighth Five Year Plan was 1750.5 Billion Units. A five year plan only gives capacity addition targets and generation target for terminal year and not five years.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) According to the Mid Term Appraisal of Eighth Five Year Plan, the main reasons for shortfall in the target of capacity addition were constraints of resources, law and order problems, problems related to externally aided projects, deficiencies in project management and in the case of private sector the delay in decision making by the State Governments.

(f) For the Approach Paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan brought out by the Planning Commission the following strategy has been suggested for achieving the desired results in the power sector :

1. Speedy completion of the on-going and approved power projects; taking steps for new projects;
2. Transparency in selection of private parties and speedy decision making for enlisting private sector participation in a significant manner;
3. Providing adequate outlets for hydel power sector for completion of on-going projects within shortest possible time; cost benefit analysis on the relative

advantage of mega project versus small project together with environmental considerations in selection of new projects; considering provisions of fiscal incentives and concessions enlisting the private sector for hydro projects; State Governments to ensure full investigations of hydro projects before they are offered to private parties

4. Adequate attention to new capacity addition of nuclear power;
5. Promotion to domestic manufacturing capability for power equipment.

Survey for Tellicherry-Mysore Railway Line

350. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the survey work on Tellicherry-Mysore railway line has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay and the time by which the survey is likely to be completed;

(d) whether the Government of Kerala has given any representation to include above railway line in the Government projects on priority basis; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Union Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The field work of the survey has been nearly completed and the report is under preparation. The report is now likely to be received by 30.9.97. The difficult terrain encountered has been the reason for delay of the report.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Action could be taken after the survey is completed.

Payment to Hindustan Cable Ltd.

351. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) is holding back payments to Hindustan Cable Ltd.;

(b) if so, the total amount payable by the DOT to the Hindustan Cable Ltd. (HCL) as on 30.6.1997 and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether HCL is starved of orders from DOT; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the nature and extent of the held up orders ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Barring orders placed in the current years there is no admissible claim pending.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Introduction of Passenger Trains

352. **SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY** : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to fulfil the demand of the people of North-Eastern States by introducing the passenger trains from different parts of North-Eastern States to Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to run Saraihat Express daily as a first step; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) Provision of additional services is a continuous process on Indian Railways subject to the availability of resources, operational feasibility and traffic justification. During 1997-98 extension of 5659/5660 Kamrup Express to Dibrugarh and extension of 6511/6512 Bangalore-Howrah weekly Express to Guwahati will provide additional services from the North-Eastern States to Calcutta. There is, however, no proposal to run Saraihat Express as a daily train.

Construction of Fly Overs

353. **SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH** : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken any steps to increase the speed of the trains between Howrah and Bandel and between Howrah and Kharagpur by constructing few fly-overs and removing the rail gates;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress, made in this regard, so far ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Three busy level crossings are sanctioned for replacement with Road Over Bridges/Road Under Bridges. In addition the State Government has been asked to sponsor proposals on two busy level crossings i.e. Bagnan and Ramrajatala.

(c)(i) Road Under Bridge at Konnagar sanctioned in 1995-96 has progressed upto 50%.

(ii) Road Over Bridge at Liluah sanctioned in 1988-89 but the State Govt. has not fulfilled the conditions to take up the work.

(iii) Road Over Bridge at Maurigram sanctioned during 1997-98. The State Govt. is yet to confirm site to enable Railway to start the work.

Wages to E.D. Employees

354. **SHRI A. SAMPATH** : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Posts had issued orders on November 27, 1996 condoning the period of absence from October 23, 1996 to October 29, 1996 of Postal Employees including the Extra-Departmental Employees;

(b) whether the Departmental Employees were paid the wages after treating the period of absence as on leave;

(c) whether inspite of the period of absence having been condoned, the extra-departmental employees have been denied wages for the period of absence;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether representations have been received for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees; and

(f) if so, whether the Government are favourably considering the request for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Extra-Departmental Agents are not entitled to wages for the period of absence from duty, on leave or otherwise, under the existing EDA (Conduct & Service) Rules, 1964. Therefore, no payment of wages was made to Extra Departmental Agents for their period of absence as this would tantamount to giving duty pay.

(e) and (f) A few representations have been received in the matter. Some officials have also to Court, and the matter is currently subjudice.

Doubling of Rail Line between Seoraphuli and Tarakeswar

355. SHRI ANIL BASU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that line utilisation capacity of Seoraphuli and Tarakeswar Section have reached on saturated point;
- (b) if so, whether Government have since considered for construction of double line between this section;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) A techno-economic survey was conducted for augmentation of line capacity of Seoraphuli-Tarakeswar section and this section was not recommended for doubling. However, some EMU trains are being augmented from 9 to 10 coaches and there is likelihood of increasing EMU train formation further by 2 coaches, thereby bringing about a significant increase in passenger carrying capacity of trains. There is hardly any goods traffic on this section.

Telephone Connections in Barddhaman

356. SHRI BALAI CHANDRA RAY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether several persons have got their names registered for telephone connections at Rasulpur under Barddhaman Telephone Exchange but they are not getting connection for a long time;
- (b) if so, whether any steps have been taken to

provide telephone connections to all waiting list persons of Rasulpur; and

- (c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The number of prospective Registered subscribers in the Waiting List of Rasulpur Telephone Exchange is 83 only as on 30.6.97

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) The present Telephone Exchange at Rasulpur with a capacity of 368 lines is having 319 working connections, and the same is planned to be replaced by 1000 C-DOT to cater the existing waiting list and the future demands of telephone connection during the current financial year.

Telecommunication services in Tripura and West Bengal

357. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps to improve the functioning of Telecommunication services in Tripura and in the District of Birbhum, West Bengal; and

- (b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following steps have been taken to improve the services :-

(A) TRIPURA :

- (i) There are 47 electronic exchanges, 44 exchanges are having STD facility. The remaining three exchanges viz. Hmanpui, Kanchanpur and Manubazar will be provided STD facility during 97-98.
- (ii) The capacity of existing telephone exchange at Agartala is being further augmented by additional 4000 lines.
- (iii) 55% villages are provided with public telephones. The remaining villages will be provided with telephone facility during the 9th Five Year Plan.